

Clark stepping high with its neat shuffle

(George Lazarus is on vacation. This column was prepared by Joe Cappo, a Daily News business writer.)

Thanks to the combination of "a simple ballet and hop scotch," Clark Gum Co. has waltzed into the upper strata of the chewing gum business.

That combination, of course is the Teaberry Shuffle, the zany, hop-step which forms the nucleus of television commercials for Clark's Teaberry gum.

SIX YEARS ago, when Philip Morris Co. acquired Clark, the gum was being distributed only on the East Coast. In 1964, the parent company decided it wanted to establish a national brand of gum, and appointed Leo Burnett Co. as its agency.

The advertising had to be geared for people "to remember us with a smile," explained Jim Shymkus, Burnett copy supervisor, at a regional meeting of the American Assn. of Advertising Agencies.

"So if they stumbled across a pack of Teaberry, they'd take a real flyer and risk a nickel."



Inside marketing George Lazarus

THE BURNETT people were looking for that certain something that happens to people who chew Teaberry. Dozens of ideas were submitted, considered and rejected . . . until someone heard Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass play a zesty number called the "Mexican Shuffle."

That was it. The agency began devising shuffles, looking for the right one.

"We looked at steps that were as involved as the last act of "Swan Lake." And some that were so simple, you never knew they happened," Shymkus said.

A SHUFFLE finally was chosen. It turned out to be "a cross between a simple ballet and hop scotch."

The next problem was to work the shuffle into the commercials, to have it interrupt everyday life.

A policeman directing traffic at a busy intersection pops a stick of Teaberry into his mouth and breaks out into the shuffle. The same thing happens to a bride walking down the aisle, to a little old lady who can hardly walk let alone shuffle, and to an Army recruit in marching drill.

"The more improbable the situation, the funnier and more memorable it would be," Shymkus said.

The ads have been memorable enough for the consumer, with Teaberry sales up 300 per cent since Clark started advertising in 1965.

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Shuffle Puts Teaberry Gum In Top Strata

BY JOE CAPPO

Chicago Daily News Service

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